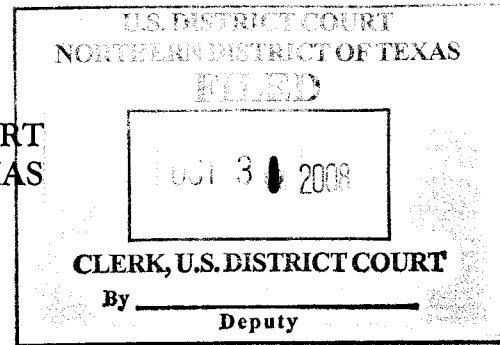


IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
DALLAS DIVISION



BUSTER J MATTHEWS, a.k.a.)
Buster James Matthews, ID # 660762,)
Petitioner,)

vs.)

NATHANIEL QUARTERMAN, Director,)
Texas Department of Criminal)
Justice, Correctional Institutions Division,)
Respondent.)

No. 3:08-CV-1653-K (BH)

ECF

Referred to U.S. Magistrate Judge

**FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATION
OF THE UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE**

Pursuant to the provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 636(b), and an Order of the Court in implementation thereof, subject cause has previously been referred to the United States Magistrate Judge. The findings, conclusions, and recommendation of the Magistrate Judge are as follows:

I. BACKGROUND

Petitioner, an inmate currently incarcerated in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice - Correctional Institutions Division (TDCJ-CID), filed the instant petition for habeas corpus relief pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254 to challenge his Dallas County conviction for conspiracy to commit capital murder. (See Am. Pet. Writ Habeas Corpus (Am. Pet.) at 2.) Respondent is Nathaniel Quarterman, Director of TDCJ-CID.

On December 20, 1991, petitioner was convicted for conspiracy to commit capital murder in Cause No. F91-04645-RL. See *Mathews v. State*, No. 05-92-0027-CR, <http://www.courtstuff.com/FILES/05/92/05920027.HTM> (docket sheet information generated May 7, 2008) (Official internet site of the Court of Appeals for the Fifth District of Texas at Dallas). On April 20, 1994, the court of appeals affirmed the conviction. See *id.*

In the instant petition, petitioner asserts three grounds for relief – (1) enhancements not proven beyond a reasonable doubt; (2) ineffective assistance of counsel; and (3) denial of due process. (Am. Pet. at 7.) He contends that he has filed no previous federal habeas petition that challenges the same conviction challenged in this action. (See *id.* ¶ 21.) He further contends that no ground is presented for the first time in this petition. (See *id.* ¶ 22.)

Despite his contention to the contrary, petitioner has previously challenged his conspiracy conviction before in federal court by way of a § 2254 petition. In fact, he has challenged it four times previously. See *Matthews v. Quarterman*, No. 3:08-CV-1450-K (N.D. Tex.) (recommendation filed Aug. 26, 2008, recognizing three prior federal habeas actions (an exhaustion dismissal, a merits denial, and a successive dismissal)). The fourth habeas action was dismissed as successive. *Id.*

Because petitioner has filed previous federal petitions to challenge his conspiracy conviction, the Court must determine whether the instant petition is a second or successive application within the meaning of 28 U.S.C. § 2244(b).

II. SECOND OR SUCCESSIVE APPLICATION

The Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, Pub. L. 104-132, 110 Stat. 1214 (AEDPA) limits the circumstances under which a state prisoner may file a second or successive application for habeas relief in federal court. See 28 U.S.C. § 2244 (b). Under Fifth Circuit precedent, “a later petition is successive when it: 1) raises a claim challenging the petitioner’s conviction or sentence that was or could have been raised in an earlier petition; or 2) otherwise constitutes an abuse of the writ.” *Crone v. Cockrell*, 324 F.3d 833, 836-37 (5th Cir. 2003); accord *United States v.*

Orozco-Ramirez, 211 F.3d 862, 867 (5th Cir. 2000).¹ A petition that is literally second or successive, however, is not a second or successive application for purposes of AEDPA if the prior dismissal is based on prematurity or lack of exhaustion. See *Slack v. McDaniel*, 529 U.S. 473, 487 (2000) (declining to construe an application as second or successive when it followed a previous dismissal due to a failure to exhaust state remedies); *Stewart v. Martinez-Villareal*, 523 U.S. 637, 643-46 (1998) (declining to construe an application as second or successive when it followed a previous dismissal due to prematurity, and noting the similarities of such dismissal to one based upon a failure to exhaust state remedies). “To hold otherwise would mean that a dismissal of a first habeas petition for technical procedural reasons would bar the prisoner from ever obtaining federal habeas review.” 523 U.S. at 645.

In this case, three of petitioner’s previous petitions were not dismissed because of any prematurity or lack of exhaustion. Under *Orozco-Ramirez* and *Crone*, petitioner was therefore required to present all available claims in his first federal petition that was not dismissed for lack of exhaustion.

“The requirement that all available claims be presented in a prisoner’s first habeas petition is consistent not only with the spirit of AEDPA’s restrictions on second and successive habeas petitions, but also with the preexisting abuse of the writ principle. The requirement serves the singularly salutary purpose of forcing federal habeas petitioners to think through all potential post-conviction claims and to consolidate them for a unitary presentation to the district court.”

Orozco-Ramirez, 211 F.3d at 870-71 (quoting *Pratt v. United States*, 129 F.3d 54, 61 (1st Cir. 1997)).

Petitioner has challenged his 1991 conspiracy conviction in four prior federal petitions, one

¹ Although the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals decided *Orozco-Ramirez* in the context of a motion to vacate under 28 U.S.C. § 2255, it also found it appropriate to rely upon cases decided under 28 U.S.C. § 2254 in reaching its decision. See 211 F.3d at 864 n.4. In the present context, this Court also finds it appropriate to make no distinction between cases decided under § 2255 and those under § 2254.

of which was decided on the merits and two dismissed as successive. The instant federal petition is successive within the meaning of 28 U.S.C. § 2244(b) because it raises claims that were or could have been raised in his first petition that was not dismissed on grounds of exhaustion.

When a petition is second or successive, the petitioner must seek an order from the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals that authorizes this Court to consider the petition. See 28 U.S.C. § 2244(b)(3)(A). The Fifth Circuit “may authorize the filing of a second or successive application only if it determines that the application makes a prima facie showing that the application satisfies the requirements of [§ 2244(b)].” *Id.* § 2244(b)(3)(C). To present a claim in a second or successive application that was not presented in a prior application, the application must show that it is based on: (1) newly discovered evidence that, if proven and viewed in light of the evidence as a whole, would be sufficient to establish by clear and convincing evidence that no reasonable factfinder would have found him guilty of the offense; or (2) a new rule of constitutional law, made retroactive to cases on collateral review by the Supreme Court, that was previously unavailable. *Id.* § 2244(b)(2). Before petitioner files his application in this Court, a three-judge panel of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals must determine whether the application makes the requisite prima facie showing. See *id.* § 2244(b)(3)(A) and (B). The Fifth Circuit has not issued an order authorizing the district court to consider this successive application for habeas relief.

Although it is appropriate for the Court to dismiss the instant successive § 2254 petition without prejudice pending review by a three-judge panel of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, it is also appropriate in some circumstances to transfer the successive petition to the Fifth Circuit for a determination of whether petitioner should be allowed to file the successive motion in the district court. See *Henderson v. Haro*, 282 F.3d 862, 864 (5th Cir. 2002); *In re Epps*, 127 F.3d 364, 365 (5th

Cir. 1997) (approving the practice of transferring a successive petition to the Circuit and establishing procedures in the Circuit to handle such transfers). In this instance, a dismissal without prejudice appears most appropriate. This Court has already informed petitioner that he must seek leave from the Fifth Circuit to file a second or successive petition. By filing this successive petition for writ of habeas corpus without first obtaining leave from the Fifth Circuit, petitioner has abused the judicial process. In addition, petitioner showed a lack of candor to the Court, and further abused the judicial process by affirmatively stating that he had filed no prior federal habeas petition to challenge his conspiracy conviction when he had filed four prior petitions to challenge that conviction in federal court.

Because the petition sought to be filed in this action is successive, and because the Fifth Circuit has not granted petitioner authorization to file a successive petition, the Court should dismiss the instant action without prejudice pending review by a three-judge panel of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

III. SANCTIONS

As noted above, petitioner has filed four prior federal habeas actions relating to his conspiracy conviction which he challenges herein. He also exhibited a lack of candor when he affirmatively stated that he had not challenged that conviction in any prior federal habeas action. The Court thus considers the propriety of sanctions.

The federal courts possess the inherent power “to protect the efficient and orderly administration of justice and . . . to command respect for the court’s orders, judgments, procedures, and authority.” *In re Stone*, 986 F.2d 898, 902 (5th Cir. 1993). Included in such inherent power is “the power to levy sanctions in response to abusive litigation practices.” *Id.* Sanctions may be appropriate

when a *pro se* litigant has a history of submitting multiple frivolous claims. See Fed. R. Civ. P. 11; *Mendoza v. Lynaugh*, 989 F.2d 191, 195-97 (5th Cir. 1993). *Pro se* litigants have “no license to harass others, clog the judicial machinery with meritless litigation, and abuse already overloaded court dockets.” *Ferguson v. MBank Houston, N.A.*, 808 F.2d 358, 359 (5th Cir. 1986).

In view of petitioner’s litigation history, the Court deems it appropriate to admonish or warn him that sanctions may be imposed, if he makes further misstatements of fact to the Court or files another successive habeas petition without first obtaining authorization from the Fifth Circuit. Should petitioner persist with his legal maneuvering, he should be monetarily sanctioned and barred from filing any additional habeas actions in federal court without first obtaining permission from the Court.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

For the foregoing reasons, the undersigned Magistrate Judge recommends that the Court **DISMISS** the instant action without prejudice pending review by a three-judge panel of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. The Court should also **WARN** petitioner that, if he makes further misstatements of fact to the Court or files another successive habeas petition without first obtaining leave from the Fifth Circuit, he will be subject to sanctions, up to and including monetary sanctions payable to the Court and being barred from filing any additional habeas actions in federal court without first obtaining permission from the Court.

SIGNED this 31st day of October, 2008.


IRMA CARRILLO RAMIREZ
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR SERVICE AND
NOTICE OF RIGHT TO APPEAL/OBJECT**

The United States District Clerk shall serve a copy of these findings, conclusions, and recommendation on all parties by mailing a copy to each of them. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1), any party who desires to object to these findings, conclusions and recommendation must file and serve written objections within ten days after being served with a copy. A party filing objections must specifically identify those findings, conclusions, or recommendation to which objections are being made. The District Court need not consider frivolous, conclusory or general objections. Failure to file written objections to the proposed findings, conclusions, and recommendation within ten days after being served with a copy shall bar the aggrieved party from appealing the factual findings and legal conclusions of the Magistrate Judge that are accepted by the District Court, except upon grounds of plain error. *Douglass v. United Servs. Auto Ass'n*, 79 F.3d 1415, 1428-29 (5th Cir. 1996) (*en banc*).


IRMA CARRILLO RAMIREZ
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE